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ABSTRACT

This study explored the role of the resource network coordinator in contemporary university-school-community agency partnerships. The study involved nine inter-organizational partnerships linked through a nationally administered multiyear grant program. Partnerships were based on holistic concepts of children's conditions and provided integrated educational and social services within public schools. Each partnership involved a university, a public school or schools in an economically disadvantaged area, and social service agencies, with further collaboration established between the university's graduate school of education and social work. Data collected over four study years included field notes, group and individual interviews with key participants, focus group transcripts, and site visits. Sections of the paper examine problems of education-community partnerships, organization theory, characteristics of a resource network coordinator, research design and methods, and assessment of project effectiveness. The study then compared the accomplishments of nine project coordinators--seven of whom were deemed unsuccessful and two of whom were considered successes. Results indicated a range of approaches to the selection of project coordinators; and most were university-based. At one of the two successful projects, participants parceled out aspects of the network coordinator role to a range of people; at the other successful site, the coordinator acted as a program-wide facilitator. (Contains 26 references.) (SM)

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Introduction: The "Resource Network Coordinator"

Veteran education critic Seymour Sarason and human services specialist Elizabeth Lorentz recently offered a permutation on Sarason's and Lorentz's decades-long review of the obdurate nature of organizations, their deeply-entrenched culture of resistance to change, and the inadequacy of so many efforts to improve them (Sarason & Lorentz, 1998). Drawing upon case studies (including programs in which Sarason and Lorentz have participated); the authors' many years of involvement in education and human services reform; and the literature on organizational theory and change agentry, Sarason and Lorentz (1998) proposed a model for "crossing boundaries" in interagency collaboration. The model builds upon a role first developed in the authors' earlier experience and writings (Sarason, Carroll, Maton, Cohen, & Lorentz, 1977; Sarason & Lorentz, 1979), and is termed a "resource network coordinator" (Sarason & Lorentz, 1998, p. 3).

This network coordinator is something of a maverick who deploys very special interpersonal skills to a collaborative effort in which the coordinator stands both within and outside prevailing power structures. Describing the characteristics of the role, Sarason and Lorentz (1998) relate the reaction of a management theorist and consultant to whom they outlined the coordinator's function and skills:

> You are describing a role that has an oxymoronic quality…a role the organization cannot and should not control. Where do you put that role on the organization

> chart, and how on earth do you write a job description? It's like being a university professor who has one of those distinguished chairs which frees them....It is one of those roaming, free-floating roles that, aside from a few universities, simply does not occur in any formal organization I know. (p. 77)

The observation concerning a university's unique ability to sustain such a role is intriguing in the context of university-school-community partnerships. The comment outlines forcefully the challenges of sustaining a role that would seem—at least on its surface—superfluous to the core interests of any organization that, like most, must justify human resource expenditures as clearly supportive of organizational mission.

According to Sarason and Lorentz, the incumbent of an endowed chair is not necessarily best suited for the network coordinator role. They recognize the almost ethereal character of a job without a power base that is, nonetheless, intended to synchronize the efforts of multiple, very likely divergent (perhaps even competing) organizations through persuasion and other non-coercive methods. But they are convinced of its efficacy, and pose questions that provide a starting point for clarifying this coordinator's role in university-school-community partnerships. As project developers formulate plans for collaborative programs, they may wish to consider those questions as instrumental in unpacking the premises of interagency collaboration:

> Between formal organizations, how do you locate strengths that add to their assets and promote their purposes in mutually beneficial ways? Are there ways by which the predictable problems of forging interconnectedness can, in part at least, be diluted or overcome? What are or should be the characteristics of individuals whose role it is to see possibilities for interconnectedness and to create and sustain forums where these possibilities can surface and be discussed? (p. 88)

This paper explores the applicability of the resource network coordinator model to contemporary university-school-community agency partnerships.

Analytical Framework

Problems of Education-Community Partnerships

For the past three decades and more, heightened interest in school and community partnerships, and more recently university participation in those partnerships, has brought to the fore the question of how such partnerships may be organized and sustained. Some researchers have underscored the importance of understanding the prevailing conception of community among members of educational institutions. Others have explored successful organizational mechanisms for school-community collaboration, and new dimensions of school-community relations. Still others have disclosed the inadequacy of some collaborative arrangements and the dearth of training for them. Additionally, recent work in organization theory offers tools for exploring the operational characteristics of those partnerships. The following briefly summarizes some of this research as it applies to collaborative leadership.

McKnight (1995) contends that most analysts view communities using a deficit model rather than an asset model to understand community needs and capacities. Mapping less apparent community resources, such as social networks, religious organizations, and institutions that have ties to the community through human associations may engage those resources for community efforts and help them overcome apparently insurmountable barriers.

"Professionalism," Andrews (1987) argues "has emerged as a code word for keeping parents at arm's length, for resisting the development of any meaningful face-to-face contact between school and parent and between teacher and community" (p. 152). The concept that the professional knows best has widened the gap between schools and

the communities they serve. Andrews asserts that many educators assign families the responsibility for students' deficiencies, thus transferring the blame for school failure away from the school to the home. But in developing a systemic-ecological conceptual framework for his analysis of school issues, Andrews looks not to the school system as the most workable source of authority and educational effectiveness, but to the ecosystem of school relationships in all their complexity and variability. Only through deriving legitimacy, in a political sense, can the school succeed. He has demonstrated how a school that can "neutralize community constraints and mobilize community resources" (p. 156) will weather the conflicts emerging in an environment of scarce financial resources, increasing diversity, and declining enrollments. Andrews calls for a new type of individual to bridge the gap between school and community: a "boundary-spanner" with credibility in both. This individual can enhance communications and legitimacy, bridging the traditional distance between school and citizen.

Researchers on school-community relations have foreseen trouble in the tendency of schools to shut out the community as a threat to the educational establishment's authority. Malen and Ogawa (1990) reviewed attempts in Salt Lake City, Utah to effect a change strategy of "decentralize-democratize" as an aspect of shared decision-making. They found that these structures did little to change influence relationships in respect to school governance and district policy. Both teachers and parents viewed their charge as merely endorsing decisions made by traditional authorities—to serve as a "rubber stamp." In addition, the norms of "civility" in interaction helped shut out the community from influencing the system, as did community members' lack of training in running governing councils. Malen and Ogawa question whether diversifying council membership would

have made a difference. They seem to suggest that community members who are less socialized to accepting the authority of the educational system might more readily break down barriers.

Despite the press for parental involvement in public schools, the administrative skills needed to deal with parents is not a widespread part of the practitioner's repertoire (Crowson, 1992). Under reform, educators are asked to go beyond encouraging parental-community involvement to institute full-fledged representation of the citizenry in the lifeways and decision-making processes of schools. Yet few educators have been trained or have experience in governance-related restructuring of school-community relations, despite the logical assumption that shared decisions between professionals and lay persons signals a new problem realm. Crowson (1992) cites research that indicates schools may be a potent breeding ground for social alienation and contends, therefore, that it is crucial for the well being of children that schools are reintegrated into the life of their community. School reform that decentralizes authority to achieve such an end brings the educational hierarchy down to a level at which parents actually can participate and see results from their efforts.

Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, and Simon (1997) provide an elaboration of the framework for such family involvement. They offer a typology that characterizes six forms of involvement for comprehensive programs of partnership: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. The last of these enumerates as one of its practices service integration through multi-agency partnerships, including civic, counseling, health, recreation, and cultural organizations and businesses. Epstein, et al. (1997) note the critical role of

action teams at the school building level to coordinate school, family, and community partnerships.

Certain characteristics of such collaborative services initiatives—still limited in number and scope—were related in a national survey (Driscoll, Boyd, & Crowson, 1995a; 1995b). The survey demonstrated that, generally, those who direct such programs were satisfied that community relationships were working, and so were the programs. Survey results indicate that staff had conducted outreach to the community and were aware of community concerns and conditions. Those surveyed also seemed to feel satisfied that fostering community involvement is not too difficult (p. 22).

Despite such optimism, ventures in interagency collaboration have encountered significant difficulties, and some large-scale efforts at the citywide level have met with little success. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, working from the point of view that interagency collaboration in mid-sized urban centers would begin to bridge the gaps in children's educational, health, and other services, created an initiative called New Beginnings (Casey Foundation, 1995). A five-year funding cycle was established by the Foundation, during which new governance organizations were established: "collaboratives" were intended to facilitate interagency actions. Upon completion of the project, the Foundation and its evaluation team concluded that, while valuable lessons were learned, collaborative arrangements failed on several important counts. They did not bridge the chasms between service systems, left front-line workers feeling imposed upon, did little to break down turf barriers, and failed to achieve much measurable change among children and families (Casey Foundation, 1995; Wehlage, 1995; White & Wehlage, 1995). In their desire to involve communities in designing and conducting this

ambitious experiment, the various parties were unable to arrive at a common vision of community and how services should be integrated within communities.

Indeed, Crowson and Boyd (1996) concluded that much more extensive study is needed of the deep structures of collaboration among institutions before an understanding can begin to be constructed of the manner in which such efforts might exert a significant impact on improving services. They cite Sarason's (1991) persistent warnings that institutional change efforts need a forum to disabuse participants of any tendency to underestimate the complexity of the task.

Application of Organization Theory

The foregoing has offered a brief review of several dimensions of the backdrop for university-school-community partnerships. Clearly, a key concern of researchers is the manner in which collaborative ventures address inter-organizational conflict. For the analysis of the projects discussed in this paper, it may be helpful, therefore, to relate briefly several concepts from the field of organization theory relevant to conflict resolution in inter-organizational collaboration.

Treating information exchange as a resource among organizations, Wheatley (1992) has observed that, increasingly, information is associative, networked, and heuristic; because relationships and non-linear connections provide a potent source of new knowledge, organizational forms that facilitate such processes foster stronger organizations. To achieve that end, Wheatley comments, organizations may resolve conflict if they "...support people in the hunt for unsettling or disconfirming information, and provide them with the resources of time, colleagues, and opportunities for processing

the information" (p. 116). This poses the intriguing problem of who shall exercise the role of such facilitation.

Resolving conflict requires a search for common ground, creating a forum for expression of and mutual attendance to conflicting viewpoints, and articulation of acceptable compromise, according to John Gardner (1990). "Coalition builders," Gardner says, "seek to formulate goals and values that lift all participants out of their separate preoccupation by gaining their commitment to larger objectives" (p. 106). To this end, Gardner proposes the establishment of "networks of responsibility," a term he coins for informal boundary-spanning engagement to achieve cohesion in a pluralistic society. These networks can create a framework for the emergence of broader community interest. Networking, as a foundation for coalition building, may provide a window on what Gardner calls "hidden constituencies" (p. 145), a concept that seems to resonate with McKnight's (1995) asset-based conception of communities.

Morgan (1998) has called attention to an organizational ecology framework for analysis of organizational interdependence. He underscores the work of Trist (1983) and others in exploring the development of informal learning networks that can generate domain-based exchange and discussion, promote shared appreciation of problems and concerns, facilitate the emergence of common values and norms, and find new solutions to shared problems. Such a model for inter-organizational collaboration as a means of exchanging resources and resolving conflict again invites the question of how to coordinate such collaborative relationships and what must be done to define the parameters of such a coordinator's role. It is therefore appropriate to turn to the suggestions offered by Sarason and Lorentz.

Defining Characteristics of a "Resource Network Coordinator"

As related above, Sarason and Lorentz (1998) have proposed a model for "crossing boundaries" in interagency collaboration that highlights the role of what they term a "resource network coordinator." They consider such a coordinator critical for successful resource exchanges among inter-agency collaboratives and, indeed, suggest that the first funding priority of collaborating parties be to underwrite the position. They suggest four conditions for setting the parameters of the coordinator's "responsibilities as well as restrictions" (p. 3). In effect, they have written a coordinator's job description. For university-school-community partnerships, key actions regarding a coordinator may be paraphrased as follows:

1. Select an individual knowledgeable about relevant local institutions, the institutions' staff and constituencies, and their decision-making processes. The coordinator must sufficiently understand the local environment to know when different players need to come together for mutual benefit, and must have sufficiently established his or her credibility to do so.
2. Assure that the coordinator is organizationally independent and has no authority to impose requirements on anyone.
3. Provide that the coordinator's primary responsibility is to propose how a given organization may be helpful to another in a specific circumstance, and allow the coordinator to convene and moderate—but not control—meetings to negotiate any proposed exchanges that the parties consider useful.
4. Make clear that no organization in the network is required to use the coordinator's services.

A role so defined would seem to operate with a limited power base. But it also poses little initial threat to "turf" defenders. For that reason, as illustrated in the cases below, it may be valuable at the outset for facilitating collaboration among university-school-community collaboration projects. As well, it may be important over time for its capacity to engage all partners in an interagency collaboration as resource providers—rather than competing contenders for externally located resources. If the "resource network coordinator" role works, it may turn a network's complexity itself—the sort of organizational complexity described by Morgan (1998) and Wheatley (1992)—into a resource instead of an entrapment. An effective coordinator may provide a mechanism that taps into the individual strengths of participants and shares them across the network, by facilitating the organizational learning process.

Research Design

Background

The setting for the research presented in this paper is a set of nine inter-organizational partnerships, intentionally distributed nationwide, and linked through a nationally administered multi-year grant program. Program participants shared a belief that fragmented educational and social services are detrimental to children. Therefore, they designed partnerships based on a holistic conception of children's conditions in order to provide integrated educational and social services at participating public schools through collaborative efforts. Each project devised structures, roles, and processes for collaborative service delivery coincidental with the training of future professionals.

Partnerships comprised a university, a local public school or schools (intentionally situated in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood), and one or more social service agencies that provided services to residents within the school's geographic community. Within each of these partnerships, a further collaboration was established between the universities' graduate schools of education and social work. The objective of the program was to: (1) provide services via the mechanism of social work and education graduate students' joint field placement (internships/student teaching) at participant public schools, while (2) devising an interprofessional education curriculum at the university. Participants intended that each of these processes (field services provision/professional education) would inform the other.

The present paper is based on a four-year study by this researcher that focused on the organizational mechanisms employed for program implementation, and that constituted the field research for the present writer's 1999 doctoral dissertation. Building on that effort, this paper attempts to assess the applicability of the "resource network coordinator" concept as a possible collaborative leadership model for university-school-community partnerships.

Research Methods

During the period of study, the researcher served on the staff of the national program that administered the network of partnerships and in that capacity conducted multiple site visits. For this study, the researcher drew upon field notes compiled during the period under review; notes from group and individual interviews; and other primary documentary sources such as transcripts of focus group interviews conducted by other

facilitators, evaluation documents, and other materials. The researcher's participatory role in the program afforded the opportunity to visit sites and to conduct follow-up activities by telephone, mail, and electronic mail, as well as to review such documents as memoranda and official agreements.

Within the broad category of the historical organizational case study approach employed for this research, a purposive sampling of subjects focused on persons who influenced projects' development. Individual interviews were conducted among participants whose formal positions, program roles, geographic locations, and professional backgrounds varied. The researcher also conducted focus group interviews, a useful tool for studying the involvement of individuals organized in group activity (Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996)--one that may be more conducive to communication because it is viewed as safe (Morgan, 1997), and that provides a format that may promote candor and greater participation (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

Site visits included the public schools that participated in the program. These visits were often conducted over several consecutive days for an entire day or more. At the school sites, the researcher attended meetings of the various team configurations that included student teachers, social work interns, teachers, school services personnel (e.g., social worker, counselor, psychologist), the school principal, community service agency staff, and university faculty and administration, as well as community members and parents. The researcher observed classrooms in which participating graduate student interns were active. As well, the researcher attended after-school activities and meetings, including such evening functions as parents' night. At school sites, the researcher conducted individual and group interviews of team members, school principals, and

community social services agency staff (who were also interviewed, when possible, at community agency sites.)

At university sites, a comparable approach was followed. These visits included observations of seminars designed for each university's student teachers and social work interns enrolled in the program. At the university, the researcher attended meetings of the various team configurations that included student teachers, social work interns, faculty and deans and other administrators of both the school of education and the school of social work, and project coordinators. The researcher attended other university site activities, including evening meetings and functions, as well as such informal sessions as team dinners. Individual and group interviews of team members, including university administrators, were conducted at the university sites.

Data collected from the field were coded so that the researcher was able to seek emerging themes (Yin, 1984), and to conduct cross-site comparisons (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This technique provided a basis for extracting patterns of behavior and the exercise of roles, a strategy that facilitated assessment of the applicability of the Sarason and Lorentz (1998) concept of the "resource network coordinator."

Criteria for Assessing Project "Effectiveness"

To provide a context for analyzing the applicability of the "resource network coordinator," i.e., whether a given project coordinator seemed to contribute to fostering stronger collaboration, it was first necessary to determine whether projects themselves were "effective" collaborations. Therefore, the researcher devised a preliminary set of three basic criteria for assessing project "effectiveness:"

1. A project that conformed to the major specifications of the grant proposal was in fact designed and implemented and, as assessed by the foundation-sponsored evaluation, complied with the objectives of the grant.
2. External continuation funding was secured after the original (foundation-funded) project was completed.
3. Representative site participants themselves expressed a belief that the project had been worth undertaking and that more goals had been achieved than had not been achieved.

A richer data mine, such as parent and community opinion surveys, longer-term duration results, and pre- and post- academic test scores, might have permitted more useful criteria for defining "effectiveness." But as such data were unavailable, the researcher focused on whether, from an organizational perspective, some partnerships demonstrated stronger functionality as partnerships, and whether the project coordinator may somehow have contributed to more collaborative processes.

As projects developed, a problem all sites faced was the administration of projects to achieve the goals set forth in their (generally) university-generated grant proposal, when faced with the competing priorities of participating institutions. These participating institutions—schools of education, social work schools, public schools, community agencies—shared at least one very basic common goal: improved services for children and families. But these institutions are organized to achieve that goal in such a manner that they are sometimes at odds with one another. The organizations were structurally very different, given the loosely knit university, the more hierarchical public school, and the community-based social service agency, and attendant cultures were disparate, as

well. Diverse participants—graduate students, deans, teachers, university faculty members, social workers—all tended to bring with them divergent values, skills, and knowledge bases, as well as different technical language and professional norms. Consequently, many pressures were exerted on these partnerships that pushed them away from collaborative undertakings. Projects also struggled with the dilemma of the competing priorities of participants' own "home" institutions, heightened by the time-limited aspect of external funding.

Some projects were not able to devise an effective administrative apparatus and did not meet any of the three criteria listed above as measures of "effectiveness." Some achieved the goal of securing continued funding despite a failure to achieve requirements of the grant. For example, one project, as detailed below, was lacking in respect to interdisciplinary activities, but mounted a highly effective social service program in the partner public schools. Yet another seemed to model collaboration, but did not achieve a continuation grant. Therefore, the researcher assumed a less hierarchical approach to the effectiveness criteria so that (1) securing <u>any</u> outside funding—not exclusively a continuation grant—might indicate an effective project, and (2) participants' widely and strongly expressed belief that the project had achieved a number of goals might serve as a stronger indicator of effectiveness. It is important to note, however, that these criteria relate primarily to functional effectiveness as collaborative partnerships, and not necessarily to a measurable impact on students' social wellbeing or academic performance. They are deemed of interest, nonetheless, as an important step toward the achievement of such larger goals.

Research Findings: Applicability of the Resource Network Coordinator Model

Comparisons of Nine Project Coordinators

The nine projects demonstrated a range of approaches to the selection of a project coordinator. Because universities exercised, in effect, lead agency status—at least at the grant proposal stage—generally deans or other administrators/staff in the dean's office recruited coordinators, and often the coordinators were university-based.

(Most projects had unique problems that may have thwarted any project coordinator, regardless of the coordinator's skills, background, or standing. Conversely, it may be worth speculating that perhaps the early selection of an effective project coordinator might have helped poorly functioning projects surmount their problems. It could also be the case that the problems inherent in these projects precluded the very possibility of selecting such a coordinator type.)

A brief summary follows of each of the seven projects deemed less "effective." This is followed by an introduction—and then a detailed discussion—of the two projects that may present useful information for developing a collaborative leadership model.

One project selected as coordinator an education school doctoral candidate/clinical instructor. The social work assistant dean was very engaged by the project and was an important presence in many of its undertakings. While enthusiastic about the project, however, the social work assistant dean, nonetheless, did not confront the day-to-day issues at the public school site—many of them arising from the school principal's resistance to aspects of the project—while the project coordinator routinely did. Given the assistant dean's role status, disagreements with the (education school) coordinator about how to handle some of the school site issues, and the assistant dean's

tendency to dominate such activities as project team meetings, the effectiveness of the coordinator became increasingly circumscribed. The coordinator conceded, as well, that, while project responsibilities provided opportunities, they also posed concerns, consuming a great deal of time spent away from other priorities.

A second project placed a social work professor at the school site, but found the project awash in the issues that confronted a newly established university-governed charter school. Preoccupied with such issues, the project seemed constrained from a full opportunity to implement the program.

At a third project, the deans of the social work and education schools confronted deep conflicts among their participating faculty members. Resolving these differences often outweighed the importance of the project itself. The deans therefore found themselves, at best, attempting to salvage the project. The role of project coordinator therefore was compromised, and was constrained to getting the project back on track once the deans' intervention enabled a set of minimally viable relationships.

The fourth project appointed two coordinators, because no single coordinator could satisfy both schools. Like the project just discussed, conflict between participating faculty of the schools of education and social work was apparent from the outset, and limited the effectiveness of the coordinator.

Projects five and six were beset by many issues that prevented them from mounting a full-fledged program. Using the "effectiveness" criteria outlined above, the researcher deemed these projects as falling on the far end of the spectrum toward dysfunction in respect to their viability as collaborative partnerships. These projects offer little in the way of insight into the project coordinator's role.

Project seven presented a dilemma in proceeding with the initial analytical framework, and helped spark the re-evaluation of "effectiveness" criteria. This project met the second and third criteria devised to measure effectiveness: it engaged the enthusiastic participation of the public school principal and faculty, brought into the partnership a significant and active community social service agency, and won the support of parents. As well, the project was among the three that eventually secured a continuation grant from the original funder. Its social work school participation was strong from the outset, and indeed provided a driving force for the project throughout. But it was this very factor that presented a dilemma in respect to collaborative leadership. For, it was a single social work faculty member (the project coordinator) who exercised an almost "heroic" role in pushing ahead throughout the first several years of the program. While the project was successful in fostering university-school collaboration, it was very late in bringing in the community agency and did not involve the university's education school in the program at the level of the social work school's participation. In short, it introduced social service interventions in the public school through the exertions of the social work faculty member and a community agency, but did not forge a university component of an institutional partnership. Therefore, while of interest from the perspective of school social service interventions, it offers little of relevance to the present research on the "resource network coordinator."

In contrast to all the projects enumerated above, at the eighth, participants essentially parceled out aspects of a "network coordinator" role to a wide range of individuals. Project coordination comprised university faculty co-coordinators from each discipline (who enjoyed a collaborative, rather than competitive relationship, as was the

case at several aforementioned projects), a student support coordinator, and a "boundary-crossing" field supervisor. This eighth project—the "Stuart Project" (a fictitious name)—may be considered, in effect, to have employed a "distributed" version of the "resource network coordinator" role. Its distributed-responsibility coordination provides a counter-example to the critical influence of a single network coordinator. Stuart, and the ninth project—henceforth referred to as the Vreeland project (also a fictitious name)—form the basis for the following discussion of the resource network coordinator model, and are discussed in detail in the following section.

The Vreeland Project

Overview

Although previous project management experience may be a useful criterion for selecting an individual to facilitate a field project, as noted above, most projects chose for this role an individual who did not bring to bear such experience. In most cases, the university engaged the coordinator, usually university-based, because the university had served as the lead agency by virtue of writing the project's grant proposal. As well, universities seemed able more readily to assign a coordinator by calling upon a junior, untenured tenure-track faculty member or a clinical faculty member. Participants viewed the projects as providing research opportunities for the former and benefiting from the field experience of the latter. But these coordinator characteristics proved not to be important determinants of project success.

Over time, conflicts among participants arose at some projects. One source of such conflicts is reflected in a comment by a social work faculty member:

> The project required some institutional retraining. The way we [in social work] perceive collaboration is not top down. The structures that are in place sometimes can't be changed overnight. We have to look at institutional structures as barriers.

Another project, said a participant, had seen constant "changes in the project [coordinator] at the local level. We have head three in the past year. There isn't the consistency that the project needs." As one school teacher commented, "There has been some role confusion in administration of the project. We don't know who is doing what between the programs." Participants at various sites became aware of the importance of a role that would achieve the sort of impact that Sarason and Lorentz (1998) have attributed to the resource network coordinator type. A "relationship-building facilitator is needed," said schoolteachers at one project—a sentiment that university faculty and graduate students at various projects supported.

One graduate student commented that such a position should be full-time and "not biased toward one discipline or the other," a characteristic that supports the concept of filling the role with someone trained and steeped in multiple professions, and thereby better equipped to function as a boundary spanner. Many other participants referred to a perceived benefit in engaging "one professional with both backgrounds" to serve in the resource-relationship-facilitation role. That person should operate in such a fashion that his or her only stake would be in making the project work by serving as a resource-facilitator. One participant discussed the need for a project staff member who could bring both professional backgrounds to the project:

> I think it would have been very helpful if they could have sought out somebody who professionally has been prepared in both these disciplines. Somebody who has a social work and education background. I can't help but think someone like that exists.

Different names were assigned this role, but in essence it was the sort of "relationship-building facilitator" mentioned above. The primary task of such a role would be to build collaboration by addressing the process difficulties participants encountered in undertaking and sustaining collaboration across professions and among organizations. In interviews on this theme, many participants expressed a perceived need for a full-time person who could work without bias toward one faction or another, devote sufficient time to the project, and enable the project to tap into external resources: models, lessons, and even "helpful hints."

At the Vreeland project, participants devised a project coordinator role that differed markedly from other programs' and that reflected the essential characteristics of the "resource network coordinator" model. At the outset, the university's participation in the project at Vreeland was loosely structured, enjoyed only minimal participation from the education school, and was weakened on the social work side because of the social work dean's extensive external commitments. Indeed, it might not have survived except for the project coordinator, who managed to engage an appropriate set of skills based on especially relevant experience.

Vreeland Project Structure

The Vreeland Project was distinctive in the manner in which it structured its program. At most of the projects, either social work or education tended to take a more active role for varying reasons. This was also the case at Vreeland. Its education component was weak at the beginning of its two-year participation. A change in the education dean during the first year may have had some bearing on that circumstance, and although the new dean (who was appointed during Vreeland's second year) was

supportive of the project, inevitably the new dean's priorities focused on establishing her administration. Vreeland partially addressed this circumstance by recruiting a new education faculty member with a background in a similar initiative at another institution and involved that faculty member early on in the project as a means to conduct research that might advance his tenure prospects.

Another tack taken by Vreeland was unique: the project engaged a faculty member from an additional university in the region, and did so for strategic reasons. The university recognized that health issues were significant in the school communities with which it partnered. Since the Vreeland project's university *did* not have a school of public health or a nursing or medical school, it enlisted a nursing faculty member from a nearby university to serve on the project. That faculty member served as a member of the school site team throughout the project.

To implement the project, an advisory council was established that included representation from education and social work, as well as the school district. The social work dean was highly supportive of the project, attended national program meetings and made a few visits to the two partner school sites. Nonetheless, he was committed to a variety of professional duties that kept him from very active engagement.

In the field, the program typically comprised a total of eight students at a given time drawn from the university's social work, education, applied psychology programs and an inter-collegiate nursing program that tapped students from the nearby university mentioned above. Participating students were assigned to serve on school site teams, one team in a middle school, and one in an elementary school that served as a feeder school to the participating middle school. School site teams comprised the school nurse, counselor,

school district social worker, principal, and, at the middle school, the seventh grade and eighth grade counselors as well as the assistant principal.

The selected schools were well chosen for the program for several reasons. First, they were in close proximity to each other, which facilitated communication and implementation of such aspects of the program as an effort to ease the transition from elementary to middle school. Second, the principals were supportive of both collaborative practices and the concept of extended services schools. And in addition, they faced student population issues, such as family mobility, that might benefit if addressed through an interdisciplinary intervention. But they also contained obstacles. For one thing, few after-school activities existed that might be built upon for project interventions. Nor did personnel exist who could monitor the project at the site more regularly. In addition, in the view of some, the policy of student suspensions for infractions tended to work against the grain of the project's intervention efforts.

Project Processes

The university hired a project coordinator using the school district's contacts. The project coordinator was hired on a part-time basis, and except for occasions when other obligations permitted, was at each site only once per week.

At the university, informal exchanges were frequent between the project coordinator and the deans and interested faculty. Formal meetings took place each academic quarter among social work, education, applied psychology, and (guest) nursing faculty. During the project's first year, a primary focus was on the development of a team-taught course that would address collaboration.

Vreeland's implementation of the project centered on the school site team. The teams had been developed to address issues around student behaviors and needs. Because it served as a vehicle for the student interns' field practicum, student participation on the team was supervised by school district site supervisors and university field instructors. Weekly team meetings included the project coordinator and frequently, at the middle school, the principal attended as well and took an active but equal-partner role in the context.

The team meetings focused on referred students whose behaviors or academic performance indicated that they were at high risk of school drop out or of encountering serious social problems. Referrals originated with teachers or other school personnel. Team members applied their relevant field of training to the case, and student interns engaged in that aspect of the intervention that corresponded to their field of study.

Development of the intervention included such actions as home visits, classroom visits, interviews, and review of files. The team then collaborated from the perspectives of the multiple professions involved and devised a specific intervention plan to provide customized services through an agency of the school or the community, including the home. As cases progressed, the teams discussed and adjusted the intervention. Through the team process, the interns—and the professional team members—learned other professions' vantagepoints and techniques, and were able to explore the impact of an interprofessional strategy. Some 20 cases per year were managed at each school.

Project Roles

As discussed, the school site team played a pivotal role in the Vreeland project. And central to that team—indeed, an unofficial team leader—was the project coordinator.

The coordinator was the fulcrum on which all elements of the project were leveraged, and served not only as team leader at the school site, but also as the primary interface to the university in a way that was also distinctive to the project. The coordinator enjoyed access at the university in a capacity that might not have been possible at other institutions where his role might have been marginalized and therefore limiting. Indeed, such a condition existed at one project. While problems existed with graduate student recruitment for the project, the coordinator was observed to exercise an instrumental role on campus in encouraging selected graduate students to participate in the project.

Indeed, what distinguished the Vreeland coordinator's identity was that it was not seen by the school and community agencies as primarily concerned with coordinating the university's project at the school merely to meet the university's obligations under the grant. The Vreeland coordinator was not viewed as a symptom of the "projectitis" (Gardner, 1994) that sometimes afflicts such initiatives, but, rather provided a suitable prescription for the "ills" projects were supposed to "remedy."

Unlike other project coordinators, the Vreeland coordinator did not spend his time trying to repair the damage the project may have inflicted on relations between the partners, but rather facilitated their collaboration. For example, the coordinator met individually and in small groups with faculty members from different disciplines to apprise them of what was happening in the project. He communicated this information not merely in his capacity as project coordinator, but as an individual recognized by university faculty as someone in touch with the overlapping community networks through which such vital information was exchanged. And his role in these meetings

served as much to advocate for university faculty participation (and to help facilitate it) as to inform participants.

This individual functioned as a truly program-wide coordinator, and the multiple points of access afforded to the coordinator in turn provided the structural mechanism for program wide coordination. The capacity to exercise the role in this fashion was facilitated by several important attributes of the individual selected. First, he held both an M.Ed. and an M.S.W., and thus he was conversant in the language, culture, and protocols of both disciplines. Consequently, he also held contacts in both areas within the community, contacts that proved valuable in expanding partnerships and gaining access to resources. Furthermore, he conceptualized the intervention from a holistic standpoint, by training. His spouse was a member of the university faculty and, as the researcher observed at the coordinator's home and the homes of his circle of friends, his social network included university faculty and such "community influencers" as politicians.

But at the same time that he was a "member" of both the university's education and social work worlds, the coordinator was, as well, based in the community and held contacts with the schools. He was a respected, and published (and therefore, from the university's perspective, perhaps more credentialed) authority on peer mediation and conflict resolution among adolescents, which was a key concern of the school and therefore a prime intervention focus for the project.

One way in which this expertise was deployed in support of the project is as follows. During one of the researcher's site visits, a local incident took place among middle school youths that involved an exchange of serious ethnic slurs with the potential to ignite a widening spiral of conflict. The project coordinator was called in to work as a

consultant with the youths involved. He subsequently brought that incident to the peer mediation-training group with which one of the student interns was working as a point of group discussion and engagement. The topic was a lively one since it was immediately relevant to the youths' own community. This example perhaps illustrates the relevance of the broader role of the project coordinator in the community as a "resource network coordinator." The coordinator was able to span the various networks in the local community that were relevant to the multiple aspects of social and educational interventions. No other figure was so positioned, with access to inputs from many walks of life, perspectives, and professional protocols.

As well, the coordinator enjoyed a degree of independence not available in other projects. He basically acted as an independent consultant to all the participating organizations, and already held their respect as a result of several years of working—in a cross-disciplinary fashion—with all of them in various projects and capacities. He was also an experienced grant writer and so was able to bring additional resources to the project in the form of a federal agency grant that supported its future directions once the current project funding ran out.

The coordinator enjoyed ties to such networks as the community policing program, the school district central office, community-based organizations, independent counselors and, at the same time, university faculty, as well as a national resource network of professional colleagues in the areas of peer mediation and conflict resolution. It was through the medium of the coordinator that a fluid network of social service agencies was connected to the project on an as-needed basis. Given his credentials in both professions, he became involved in monthly meetings of the school district's school

social workers on their use of collaboration in the schools and in the community, and to foster closer cooperation with district school social workers as a group.

These network connections enabled the Vreeland coordinator to exert an impact that far outweighed others. Unlike coordinators of the other projects, the Vreeland coordinator brought to bear an extensive background in appropriate activities and with traits suitable for coordinating such projects. Given his independent contacts with the school district, as well as the university, the coordinator was able to facilitate cooperation among all parties and proved to be the critical player in fostering collaboration. He kept the university's involvement functional while still focusing on development of the field component. Based on previous consulting work, he enjoyed a strong professional relationship with the principal of the school where the project was situated. Therefore, with the principal's confidence, he was able to serve as team leader at the school site, while also serving as the primary interface to the university.

The coordinator's role was viewed by the school and community agencies as congruent with and centered on their own goals, not primarily the university's, while at the university, the coordinator was appreciated for his ability to stay in touch with diverse and complementary community networks. In this sense, the project coordinator functioned at a program-wide level, fostering the exercise of "resource network coordination."

The "Resource Network Coordinator" and the Principal's Role

It is important to note that the mere participation of the school's principal was not a sufficient condition for the success of any project. Nor did its lack necessarily derail it. Certainly, no school site project is likely to make gains if the school principal opposes it.

But the role and disposition of the principal toward program goals seemed an indeterminate factor in the nine projects studied.

At the charter school project, the project's momentum demonstrated that some forces could overcome even a principal's indifference: the principal, indifferent to the project, resigned after the school's first year, while the project endured. Another project enjoyed a highly supportive principal, and an exemplary social work faculty member as coordinator, yet was unable to foster a viable interdisciplinary program. At another project, a supportive principal and a dedicated social work faculty member as coordinator helped assure a strong school site project, but, not surprisingly, could do little to correct a weak interdisciplinary effort at the university.

Although a principal's willingness and enthusiasm seemed not sufficient to determine the course of a given project, what does emerge from the Vreeland project is the importance of the relationship between the principal and the coordinator. Several examples may serve to support this point.

The Vreeland project was one of those that accorded an equal footing to the principals by using project funds to support their participation in the national program's annual meetings. The project underwrote the middle school principal's attendance at a national interprofessional education meeting of a broader network of 200 projects; he was, the researcher observed, the only school principal in attendance other than the several who served on the official program.

When interviewed at the school site, the middle school principal displayed a conviction that services integration in schools was an essential key to the future of public schooling. He had read such key works as Dryfoos's Full Service Schools (1994) and

was conversant in the relevant issues. Furthermore, he was receptive to the role of interprofessional education in the overall process and to the part to be played by schools as training partners in that process.

But beyond ideas and receptivity, the principal also engaged in action. He sought out collaborative agencies for involvement with the project. In addition, he seemed to recognize fully the turf and power compromises a principal would need to make in order for such interprofessional collaboration to work, as evidenced, for example, in his equal-footing style in school site team meetings.

By broadening the opportunities for interaction between the principal and the coordinator, by extending these interactions beyond the domain of the school into national forums, as well as discussions of the research literature, through attendance as equals at all program functions—and then some—and by allotting the time for relationship development in these contexts, the Vreeland project emphasized the equal partnership that formed the basis of their collaboration.

The coordinator and the principal were not in complete agreement on all issues. The coordinator expressed his view to the principal that disciplinary out-of-building suspensions were counter-productive to the goals of the project, yet the principal maintained that policy. The coordinator was able to function effectively in the face of disagreement over a significant policy matter. Thus, the coordinator-principal relationship, exercised collaboratively, strengthened the project when it might otherwise have damaged it. But equally important is the point that the two did not need to agree on everything to make the project work—a condition that characterizes an effective

coordinator who can, as several theorists cited above argue, surface differences that might, under the surface, torpedo the project's collaborative spirit.

The importance of the coordinator-principal relationship is demonstrated in another example. Vreeland participants recognized that the principal is as critical as any other participant in all aspects of the project, not merely those that require the principal's assent at the school site. The university participants at Vreeland and the principal himself acknowledged the importance of the principal's participation in university planning, and so involved him in all aspects of project activities. It was their belief that if an interprofessional curriculum were to be effective, it needed the principal's participation in shaping it. In these and other dimensions of the life of the project, the principal's rapport with the project coordinator added a great deal of momentum to the actions undertaken by the project through the medium of the coordinator.

Additional Outcomes

Midway through the two years of the Vreeland project supported by the initial grant, the coordinator reported indications of improved university and school district relationships, a greater frequency of exchanges concerning how university students were trained, and central office appreciation of the benefits that might hold for district schools. One very tangible reflection of that process was the decision by the school district to buy out half the coordinator's time for the project's second year so that, in combination with the project's initial grant funding, he could serve on a full-time basis. And when the initial project funding ran out, the university and the school district continued to fund his role, thus adding a measure of continuity and a step toward institutionalization of the project.

By virtue of this financial support of the project, the school district's interest increased in such collaboration and in an extended services school model. As well, with the coordinator serving as its broker, a collaboration on a grant proposal led to a U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant to support development of a full-service school-within-a-school for those Vreeland students and families determined to be most at risk.

The Stuart School Project

Focus group interview data indicate that—as at all sites—Stuart participants experienced in the formative stage issues around turf, mistrust, and inability to communicate within a common frame of reference. Deans and faculty reported that the very activity of working together on the project compelled them to address issues and, by devising solutions, they were able to overcome an initial mistrust and tendency toward turf protection.

Stuart participants conducted a retreat at the public school site as the project was launched. The retreat was intended to instill a sense of the values of the program; siting it at the school provided a way to air issues in an environment that perhaps tipped the university and public school power balance away from the university's lead agency role. The retreat was attended by deans, university and school project staff, professional school students, and, as well, parents. Social work and education faculty, the project co-coordinators, and social work and education students organized the retreat, which focused on identifying and meeting children's needs. The opportunity to air differences and discover commonalities, as the education dean would later attest, provided an early step toward addressing these differences in the context of common goals.

As noted earlier, Stuart participants parceled out coordination elements to a "boundary-crossing" field supervisor, a student support coordinator, and university faculty co-coordinators. In effect, this distributed-responsibility coordination created a version of the "resource network coordinator" role.

The internship supervisor for education students was a licensed social worker and school psychologist whose supervisory role included reading and commenting on students' journals. As well, the supervisor focused not only on specifics of the student's field experience, but also on the objectives of the interprofessional intervention. Given the supervisor's professional background, she was able as well to coordinate the specific issues presented by students in the public school with the professional students' lesson planning process, and to advise interns from a social services perspective as they undertook provision of educational services.

As Stuart participants viewed it, the selection of a "boundary-crossing" individual to oversee the internship experience served as a strategy for the real-world expansion of the social work and education students' worldview to include the social and psychological dimensions of the issues they faced in the classroom. While the approach to social work supervision was not as "boundary-crossing" in its design, it did provide for the social work students to engage in school site case management. The internship supervisor was a doctoral student in social work at Stuart who spent one day a week in each of the two program schools.

Yet another important enabling factor for collaborative service provision at the school sites was a student support coordinator. The incumbent in this role—hired by the school—interacted with teachers, social workers, paraprofessionals, and parents and, in the

course of the project, with the Stuart interns. The role was intended to coordinate services across this array of providers and concerned parties.

As with several other projects, the university's participation featured joint coordinators, one from education and one from social work. But this move did not grow out of an inability to settle on such a role for one professional school instead of the other, as was the case at several projects. For the Stuart project, the professional schools' participating faculty wrought a common ground for achieving both individual and joint goals. One education faculty member commented in an interview that the two professions' students were trained to understand the contexts of children's lives and were therefore better able understand their needs and therefore to provide suitable ways to address those needs. A social work faculty member commented that the program effectively addressed the social work profession's agenda of working directly in school systems in a manner that would more fruitfully meet the needs of children.

In addition, school personnel devised a mechanism intended to facilitate the sort of collaboration that would be needed if various providers of services were to engage more effectively at the site. A service team was established whose regular meetings provided a forum for teachers and the school social worker, along with other relevant staff (including paraprofessionals) to devise comprehensive approaches to students' issues. By assigning to multiple persons aspects of the Sarason/Lorentz coordination model, the Stuart project configured a "resource network coordinator" through a distributed responsibility approach that, nonetheless, captured key components of the model.

Assessment: Applicability of the Resource Network Coordinator Model

To use the Vreeland and Stuart projects to assess the utility of the "resource network coordinator" concept as a model for university-school-community partnerships, three questions must be addressed:

1. Were the Vreeland and Stuart projects effective?
2. Did these projects apply the essential features of the "resource network coordinator" model?
3. Did such application contribute to project effectiveness?

Employing the criteria for effectiveness outlined earlier, it can be said that both projects met the test of all three criteria. Each designed a project that conformed to the grant specifications and implemented that project; each secured continuation funding from some source—an externally conferred affirmation; and each demonstrated nearly unanimous strong (though not uncritical) support for the project among participants.

This last criterion may seem curious on the surface. But it may be argued that it is a significant component of inter-organizational collaboration. Many such projects fail because of conflict among participating organizations, manifested by the participating individuals. The New Beginnings project cited earlier (Casey Foundation, 1995) is but one large-scale example; most of the projects described in the present study constitute additional examples. The success of inter-organizational partnerships is contingent upon their capacity to endure despite inherent tensions. If participants are not satisfied that such arrangements are worthwhile, the partnership is unlikely to last and thereby achieve its goals. All the more important, then, that partnerships devise effective mechanisms for conflict resolution.

The next question is, do these two projects conform to the "resource network coordinator" model? To answer this, the Vreeland project may be examined on each of the four coordinator characteristics established by Sarason and Lorentz and outlined on page 9.

1. An individual knowledgeable about and credible within the local environment. The Vreeland coordinator emerged from and knew well existing broad community networks, including the local schools and social service agencies, where he enjoyed the respect of the varied partners. His publications and other activities had earned him credibility among university partners.

2. An individual who is organizationally independent. The Vreeland coordinator was an independent consultant hired by the participating organizations expressly to coordinate the project.

3. The coordinator primarily proposes specific occasions of mutual benefit among partner organizations and convenes/moderates—but does not control—inter-organizational meetings. The Vreeland coordinator served as the facilitator of all key meetings, from school site teams to university-school-agency sessions. He brought together various configurations of the partners on specific issues, but did not have the authority to control outcomes.

4. No organization is required to use the coordinator's services. This was the case with Vreeland's participating organizations, and each had the opportunity to reject the coordinator's suggestions.

On all four conditions, then, Vreeland applied the Sarason/Lorentz concept. As discussed, the Stuart project differed significantly in that it did not engage a single

individual as coordinator, but engaged, rather, co-coordinators who constituted a "mini-network" of coordination. But this mechanism, too, generally adhered to the Sarason/Lorentz approach.

The third question is, if a project was effective and used the given model, was its effectiveness attributable to its application of that model. To attempt an answer, the four-point template of the Sarason/Lorentz model is imposed below on the Vreeland project. (Because it departs from the Sarason/Lorentz model, the Stuart project is not examined on this third and final question.)

1. Knowledgeable/credible coordinator. As detailed, the Vreeland coordinator's multi-disciplinary training and practice contributed to his "boundary-spanning" abilities and provided detailed and intimate knowledge of the partners' communities. A history of relationships with the various players--and other organizations in the partners' more extended networks--enhanced the coordinator's ability to bring organizations together to exchange resources. The coordinator was also able to reach beyond the formally constituted partnership--such as the school district central office, the nursing school, local politicians and community activists, and peer mediation experts--to engage specific resources for the partnership through the use of influence and the illustration of mutual benefit.

2. Organizationally independent coordinator. Unlike every other project's coordinator, the Vreeland coordinator was not a direct employee of any of the participating organizations and held no permanent attachment to any of them, while also enjoying a history of relationships with each. This independence made him accountable only to the partnership itself, not (ultimately) to any given partner who provided his paycheck. He

used this independence to nudge, to challenge, and to expand the parameters of the project, as in the example above, incorporating his community-based conflict resolution work into the school team activities. His primary incentive was to make the partnership work, not to defend the turf of his home organization, as he had none.

3. Coordinator convenes/moderates—but does not control—specific inter-organizational resource exchanges. The Vreeland coordinator facilitated a range of resource exchanges, from the school site team activities to the engagement of school district funding for the project. It is noteworthy that the latter offered him a personal incentive that also met project needs, in that it bought out the remaining half of his time and thereby allowed him to devote himself full-time to the project—a condition sought by Vreeland and other project participants.

4. Organizational discretion over coordinator's services. Without an organizational power base, the Vreeland coordinator's effectiveness relied upon influence, not authority. The wielding of such influence could be accomplished only through the achievement of partner consensus, a process that--once routinized--strengthened collaboration as the project's mode of operation.

The Vreeland project seems to answer each of the three questions posed above in such a fashion that it may be concluded that its application of the "resource network coordinator" approach contributed to its effectiveness as an inter-organizational collaboration. Therefore, this role may offer some helpful guidelines for school-university-community partnerships. As these partners examine various approaches to the issue of effective leadership of a collaborative arrangement, an examination of the resource network coordinator illustrates an approach that focuses on mutual benefit.

Limitations of the Vreeland and Stuart Cases as Supportive of the Model

Vreeland's program is distinguishable from the others in several ways that have as much to do with the institutions involved and their setting as with the project's design. For one thing, of all the projects, it was the only one not undertaken by a university within or adjacent to a major urban area. Vreeland is situated some distance from any population center in a largely rural state. The nearest city—which was the site of its public school partner—is small in comparison to any of the other participants' home cities. Indeed, when three sites were selected for a continuation grant, Vreeland was discounted in part because its small size and relative remoteness would seem to serve as a model only for similarly small-scale settings, and not for large urban districts. Therefore, it is appropriate to raise a caution about the applicability of the Vreeland project as a potential model: Is the Vreeland approach limited in effectiveness only to small cities in rural areas?

The Vreeland coordinator was not located full time at the school site, but enjoyed fluid access to it. He was independent of school structures and politics yet comfortable and credible in its culture, as well as that of the university. But the Vreeland project leaves unanswered the question of whether a full-time on-site coordinator may be more effective. Vreeland participants themselves contended that a limitation of their program was the fact that the coordinator was only on site one day per week. As noted above, one outcome of the project was to win the school district's agreement to underwrite more on-site time for the coordinator, reflecting, at least, Vreeland participants' desire to increase time-on-site for the coordinator. This is an issue that seems to elude definitive resolution based on case evidence, and is probably best resolved on a site-by-site basis.

As emphasized earlier, the Stuart project, of course, departs considerably from the Sarason/Lorentz model in its engagement of what is effectively a loosely structured coordination team rather than a single network coordinator. Nonetheless, members of that team share characteristics with the role model that seem to deserve consideration in planning university-school-community partnerships.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Earlier, discussing the analytical framework for this paper, the researcher cited Wheatley's (1992) observation that we have come to understand more clearly that information is associative and networked; organizational forms that facilitate non-linear information exchanges through participant relationships in effect share resources and thereby foster stronger organizations. Consequently, organizational networks may resolve conflict by devising support for the surfacing of unsettling or disconfirming information, and providing resources of time, colleagues, and opportunities for processing that information. In addition to fostering other dimensions of collaboration, the Vreeland project coordinator seems to have exercised that role, providing a mechanism for information—and disagreements—to work through the partnership network as a resource and to forestall or resolve conflict.

At Stuart, "coalition builders" of the sort commended by Gardner (1990) succeeded in helping participants formulate goals and values that liberated them from their own separate preoccupations and enabled their commitment to larger objectives. The partnership network, facilitated through a boundary-spanning coordination team, provided a framework for project participants to engage in a broader community interest that pushed the project forward despite obstacles. The Stuart project's school-site retreat

seems to resonate with the concern of Crowson and Boyd (1996) about exploring the deep structures of collaboration as an important first step in understanding how collaborative efforts might significantly improve services. This project seemed cognizant at least, of the need for participants to recognize the enormous complexity of the task, as Sarason (1991) warned.

Along the lines described by Morgan (1998), both these projects devised informal learning networks for information exchanges and the promotion of shared appreciation of problems and concerns, which in turn facilitated the development of common values and norms and the devising of jointly-crafted solutions to shared problems.

As related earlier, at one point the Vreeland coordinator employed his experience in peer mediation to help resolve a conflict among local youth. This example of the coordinator's broader role in the community echoes the call by Andrews (1987) for a new type of individual to bridge the gap between school and community: a "boundary-spanner" with credibility in both, who can enhance communications and legitimacy, bridging the gap between school and community. Such traits and actions also match a defining characteristic of the "resource network coordinator" model proposed by Sarason and Lorentz: knowledge of and credibility in the local community. The Vreeland coordinator spanned multiple community networks that could facilitate or hamper the multiple dimensions of social and educational interventions.

The characteristics of the Vreeland project coordinator conform to many of the characteristics of the Sarason/Lorentz "resource network coordinator" model, and allowed the project to surmount the obstacles other projects could not overcome. The definition of the project coordinator's role, and the selection of a coordinator with the

"boundary-crossing" characteristics and experience of the Sarason and Lorentz "resource network coordinator" model demonstrated at Vreeland, may constitute a necessary—though not sufficient—step for a project that undertakes collaboration among universities, public schools, and community social service agencies.

The "resource network coordinator," as Sarason and Lorentz (1998) suggest, can stand outside the organization chart, avoiding the sort of actions that are needed to protect long-term job interests (p. 49). Program planners should heed the authors' warning (p. 56) that "excellent leaders" will not suffice to develop and sustain coordinated efforts. For university-school-community-collaboration programs, the "resource network coordinator" may function as an agent who can, with equal finesse, engage the resources of the university, the school, and the community.

Recommendations for Future Research

Sarason and Lorentz (1998) provide additional case examples on the "boundary crossing" activities of a network coordinator. Their model may serve as a starting point for learning more about coordination of interagency partnerships. Further research might explore in greater detail than do Sarason and Lorentz how the network coordinator can achieve the boundary crossing activities called for throughout this paper and—in light of the continuing value placed on expertise—still help programs satisfy the agencies that fund them. Such research, especially if grounded in the field experiences of collaboration programs, may also uncover additional characteristics that might be added to the profile of the role. Certainly, local adaptations will be in order, and these too may generate a basis for additional refinements.

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